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Message Text

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64
ACTION L-03

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 HEW-08 IO-14 CIAE-00 INR-11

NSAE-00 RSC-01 VOE-00 SCA-01 PPTE-00 INSE-00 DRC-01

/056 W
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R 251800Z SEP 74
FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5870

UNCLAS KINGSTON 3427

EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: CI, PINS, CPAB, JM
SUBJECT: INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION--
ENGLISH LITERACY REQUIREMENT FOR UNITED STATES
CITIZENSHIP

REF: STATE 191781

1. THERE IS NO DEJURE REQUIREMENT IN JAMAICA THAT
THE PRIMARY LANGUAGE OF THE COUNTRY (ENGLISH) BE
LEARNED PRIOR TO OR AFTER ADMISSION TO CITIZENSHIP

2. AS EXPLAINED BY A SENIOR GOJ IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL,
WHILE LACK OF KNOWLEDGE OF ENGLISH IS "NOT AN
ESSENTIAL BARRIER" TO ACQUIRING JAMAICAN CITIZENSHIP,
IN PRIACTICE IT IS A CONSIDERATION IN THE PROCESS OF
EVALUATING CITIZENSHIP APPLICATIONS. THE GOJ WANTS
ITS NEW CITIZENS TO BE QUICKLY ASSIMILATED INTO THE
LIFE OF THE NATION AND THEREFORE DESIRES THAT
APPLICANTS HAVE A REASONABLE CONVERSANT KNOWLEDGE OF
ENGLISH. THERE ARE NO HARD AND FAST ADMINISTRATIVE
GUIDELINES, HOWEVER

3. MANY CHINESE WHO NEITHER SPOKE NOR READ ENGLISH
HAVE BEEN GRANTED CITIZENSHIP, AS THE GOJ WAS
CONFIDENT THAT THEY WOULD BE QUICKLY ASSIMILATED
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INTO AND TAKEN CARE OF BY THE LOCAL CHINESE COMMUNITY.

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ON THE OTHER HAND A COUPLE WITH SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN, WHO ONLY SPOKE AN ESOTERIC LANGUAGE, AND HAD NO FRIENDS OR COMMUNITY IN JAMAICA TO ASSIST, COULD HAVE THEIR CITIZENSHIP APPLICATION REFUSED. THE SKILLS, RESOURCES AND PROMINENCE OF THE APPLICANT ARE OTHER FACTORS IN CONSIDERATION OF THE APPLICATION AND FREQUENTLY COUNTERBALANCE THE LACK OF ENGLISH

4. UNDER THE JAMAICAN NATIONALITY ACT, THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS IS NOT REQUIRED TO ASSIGN ANY REASON FOR REFUSAL OF A CITIZENSHIP APPLICATION, NOR IS HIS DECISION SUBJECT TO ANY APPEAL OR REVIEW IN ANY COURT. THUS IT IS VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO ASCERTAIN THE ACTUAL INCIDENCE OF CASES WHERE CITIZENSHIP WAS REFUSED BECAUSE OF A LACK OF ENGLISH. GERARD

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